

A
S E R M O N

Preached
At the ASSIZES ^{4.}

HELD AT

B E D F O R D,

B Y

The RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD CHIEF JUSTICE *EYRE*

A N D

The HONOURABLE
Mr JUSTICE *DENTON,*

On *Friday, July 17th, 1730.*

By THO. CHAMBERLAYNE COXE M. A.
Rector of *Brimpsfield* in *Glocestershire*, and
Fellow of *Balliol* College in *Oxford*.

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T O
Sir **JOHN NAPIER**
Baronet,
High Sheriff of the County
of **BEDFORD**;

A N D T O

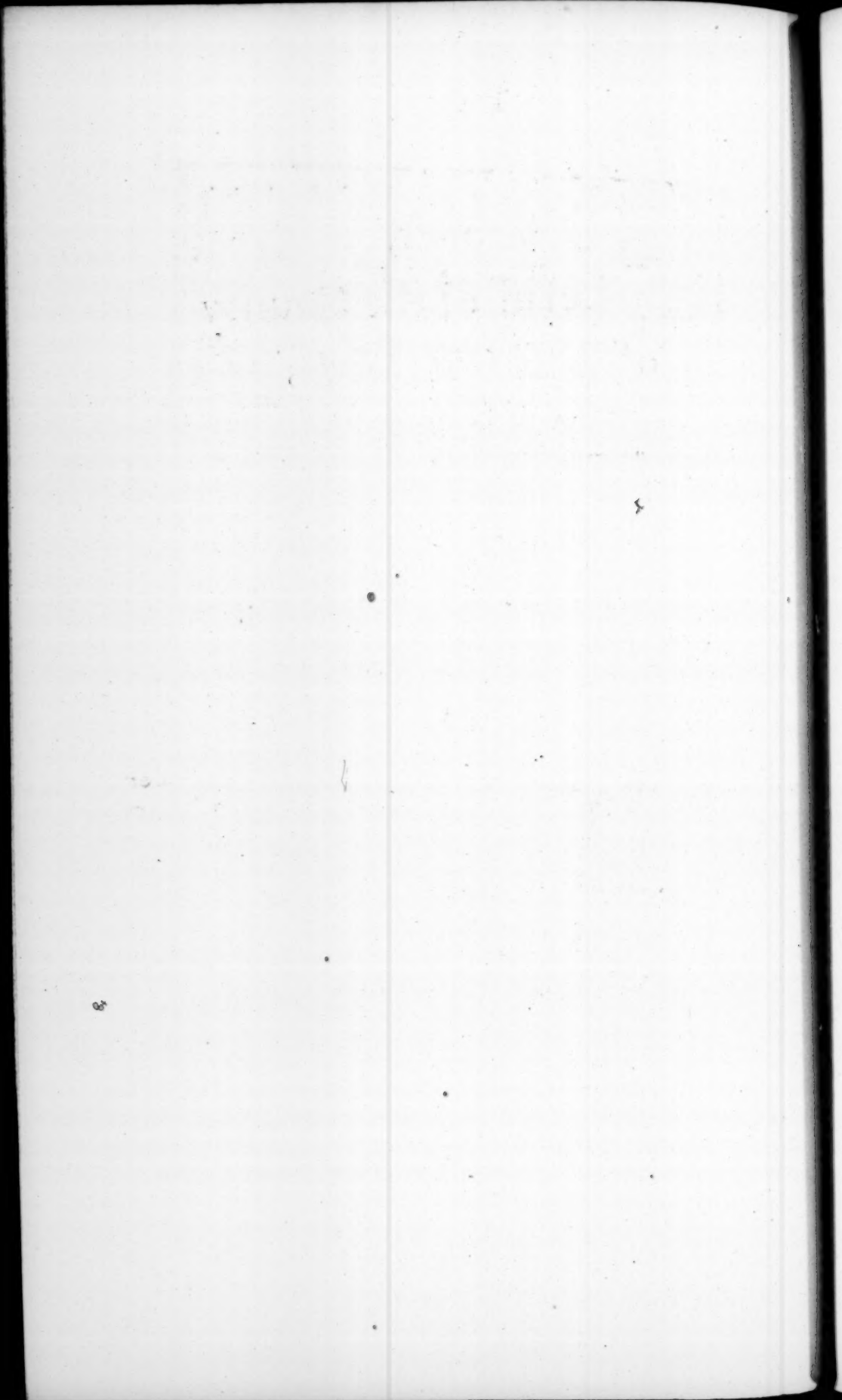
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<i>Sr Humphry Monoux Bar.</i>	<i>Robert Abbot Esq;</i>
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<i>John Harvey Esq;</i>	<i>John Pomsfret Gent.</i>
<i>Humphry Monoux Esq;</i>	<i>Matthew Priaulx Gent.</i>

The Gentlemen of the Grand Jury;
This Sermon, made Publick at their Request,
is with the greatest Respect Inscribed by

Their most obedient

Humble Servant

T. C. COXE.





PROV. XXIX. 2.

*When the Righteous are in Authority,
the People rejoice: but when the
Wicked beareth Rule, the People
mourn.*



HUMAN Government has been often said to be a necessary Evil: And indeed in some sense it may be rightly considered as an Evil; to wit, as the Necessity of it is founded on a Supposition of a certain Want of it, that is, on a Supposition, that the Rules of Equity and right Reason will not of Themselves be sufficient to keep Men within the Bounds of Duty; and that Good and Evil will not, as to the Practice of Mankind, be enough distinguished by their own Essential Difference; but that there will be wanting some
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External Coercive Power to Inforce the One, and Prohibit the Other. But not to enter into Disquisitions about the Nature of Government; be This as it will, be it's Nature what, or it's Rise whence it will; that it is Absolutely Necessary, we want not the Arts of Argument or Oratory to demonstrate. The impossibility of Society without it is almost self-evident. Every one's own daily Observation must convince him, what a Blessed State of Liberty we should all enjoy, did Men own no Governours but their Wills, no Rules of Action but their own Passions and Appetites. Very easy surely it is to conceive, that the World, Wicked as it is under all the Restraints of *Laws*, would scarcely be more Innocent without *any*.

Taking for granted therefore, what the Royal Authour of the Political Observation of my Text takes for granted, that it is unavoidable in the Nature of Things, that in every Community Power must be somewhere lodged, I shall endeavour briefly to evince the Justness of the whole Observation, and shew, that in what Hands it is to be lodged, is a Matter of the last Consequence; nothing less depending upon it, than the Happiness or Extreme Distress of the whole Community; for that it is strictly true, that *when the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoice: but when the wicked beareth Rule, the People mourn.*

I shall secondly add a few Reflections arising from the above Observation.

Religion and Liberty must by every Thinking Man be allowed to be two Points of all others the most considerable. If the One be very Important, as it is beyond doubt Requisite to his Well-being in this World; it will not be difficult to prove, that even for the same reason the Other is so too: but much more *so* is it, as it is indisputably the Foundation of his Happiness or Misery in an Infinitely more Durable State, that of the World to come. Whatever Capacity then we view Ourselves under, whether as Men or Christians, as Individuals or as combin'd together into Society, the Security of these two Points, that is, a Security of our Civil and Religious Rights, must be Essential to our happiness, Publick or Private, Present or Future. And how much this is depending on the good or bad Dispositions of those, that bear Rule, will be easily acknowledged. The End of giving Power to some particular Members of a Community is undoubtedly the Preservation of the Rights, I have mentioned, to the Whole; and when it is happily in the Possession of Men, *Able* enough, and *Honest* enough, Properly to Exert it in Their Defence, little have the People to fear either at Home or from Abroad. For as the Fountains of Justice will then be kept pure and uncorrupted from the Pollutions of Avarice and Partiality, and by the strict Observance of Wholsome Laws the Lives and Properties of the Subjects will be Protected, both from secret Fraud and open Violence; as the Government will in all Instances

stances proceed constantly and uniformly in Just and Equitable Measures; It will not only endear itself to the People, who immediately receive the benefit of it's Administration, but will also by the same means induce Neighbouring Nations to court it's Alliance, or dread it's Justice. For it is not reasonable to Imagine, that the Justice of that State, which is always severe in punishing the Injury of one Private Person towards another within their own Society, will ever tamely suffer Indignities and Insults of Foreigners upon the Whole Community to pass unregarded, without Reprisal or Satisfaction. Under these Circumstances then, when the *Authority* of the *Righteous* thus shews itself, the People certainly will with reason *rejoice*; They will sit each Man *under his Vine and his Fig Tree*, in Ease, Peace, and Quiet, full of Contentment in themselves, and full of Gratitude to their Benefactors.

But how Dreadfully altered will the Scene be, if we consider the latter part of the Observation of the Text, and suppose a *People mourning*, because *the Wicked beareth Rule*? What in Government is most to be dreaded (What indeed We of this Nation, Thanks be to God and the Wisdom of our Legislature, have as little reason to fear, as Subjects can have; but yet What from Weakness or Wickedness of Magistrates has sometimes happened) is; that the Power given, as has been said, for the *Preservation* of the Rights and Properties of the People, should Itself be employed to *Subvert* them. In this Case
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Wretched is their present Situation, more so their Prospect. For how shall they help themselves? To whom shall they fly for Refuge? In General Cases of Injury, the obvious Remedy is Application to their Superiours and Governours; but the Misfortune is, that in the Case now supposed, *They* are the Authors of their Injury. Shall they talk of their Laws, and place their Confidence in *Them*? A very little acquaintance with the History of Politicians will inform them, that Laws are but as *Reeds* in the hands of an Hypocritical Patriot: It is the least part of his Art to bend *Them* to his own Purposes; and we can hardly find an Instance of a Statesman surrounded with Power and Dependants, that could not readily make appear the Equity of the most flagrant Wrong, and shew the Justice of the most evident Oppression. When such a Man beareth Rule, sure it is, that *the People will mourn*. But to be more particular. — What will a People reasonably expect from those, to whom are committed the Reins of Government? How are They to answer the Wise Man's Character of the *Righteous*? They will expect from them Knowledge, Vigilancy, and above all, Integrity; such Knowledge and Vigilancy, as shall give them abundant Opportunities of being Serviceable; such Integrity, as shall put them above a Possibility of neglecting those Opportunities from the low Suggestions of Fear or Favour, or the sordid Views of private Advantage. In short, they will be *Such*, as *Jethro* describes, and recommends to *Moses*, to set over the People

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of *Israel*; to wit, *Able Men, Such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness*. In *Such* Justice and Beneficence will be the sole Principles of Action, the constant Motives of all their Proceedings. Under *Such* Good Laws will receive additional Goodness from being Discreetly Executed. Under *Such* the Injured, though poor and needy, will never *despair* of Redress; the Authors of Injury, though in the midst of Greatness, will never *hope* for Impunity. In a word, influenc'd by the Example, and supported by the Authority of *Such*, Every thing, *that is Lovely and of Good Report, will flourish and abound*: Nothing will be left unattempted for the Suppression of *Wickedness and Vice, and for the Maintenance of God's True Religion and Virtue*. And however disagreeable, or absurd this Doctrine may seem to the Infidel or Libertine; very certain it is, that the Magistrate cannot more effectually promote the Welfare *even of Civil Society*, than when He Zealously engages in the Cause of Virtue in general, and in particular of the Christian Religion.

That *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, and Sin is a reproach to any People*, is a Maxim of Policy of the Greatest and Wisest Prince, that ever sat on a Throne; and is a Truth confirm'd to us by the concurrent Testimony of the History of all Ages, of Reason, and of Revelation. It is in two respects true; both as *Moral Good and Evil* are in Themselves productive of *Natural*, and as they respectively bring with them the Divine Favour or Displeasure. And if God be for Us,
Who

Who can be against Us? But unless the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain. So that whatever be the Preparations of Fleets and Armies, whatever the Valour of the People, the Conduct and Fortune of the Prince, and the Counsel and Wisdom of his Ministers; without the Protection of Providence still *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the strong: there is no Confidence in Princes, nor in any Child of Man.*

And if it be confest, as it must on all hands, that the Practice of Morality in General is thus conducive to National Prosperity; it follows, that That Religion, which prescribes the most likely and effectual Means to engage Men in the pursuit of Virtue, is the best Calculated to the Ends of Government. And without much difficulty will it be proved, that in this respect, the *Christian* Religion justly claims the Superiority over all the Systems of Philosophy or Forms of Religion, that were ever received or instituted in the World. And if so; why is it daily asserted, and earnestly contended, that Offences against *It* are no Offences against Society, and therefore not Cognisable by the Civil Magistrate? It is the Happiness of the Subjects of these Kingdoms, to have Their Religion established to Them by Law: Having therefore a sort of *Legal Property* in it, They have as much a Right to be defended and protected in it by the Secular Power, as in any other of their Possessions. And We are humbly to hope, that We or Our Posterity shall never see the time, when the Crown of *Great Britain* will be possessed by a Prince, who will
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separate the Title of *Supreme Governour* from that of *Defender of the Faith*. But not to insist upon this *Accidental* Right, we have to our Religion; let us return to our assertion, that Christianity from it's own *Intrinsic* Excellency, if considered only as a Scheme of *Moral* Life, deserves the Care and Countenance of Governours, as it is evidently the best contrived for the safety and support of the Publick Good. If Universal Love and Benevolence, and all the Social Virtues, which are the Cement and very Essence of regular Communities, are from the Voice of *Reason*, and in *their own Nature, Duties* (which the Old Philosophers endeavoured to explain to the Heathen World, and our Modern Enemies to Revelation value Themselves upon maintaining) They surely are in a stronger Light *Such*; when under the *Christian* Institution, that Voice of *Reason* is supposed to be seconded by the Positive *Authority*, and it's Precepts enforced by the Express *Commands*, of God Himself. Whatever therefore the *Moral Heathen* or *Deist* shall, as a Member of Society, acknowledge Obligatory, is to the *Christian* a Double Obligation. If *Reason* teach the Former, that Magistrates ought to be Just, Benign, and Careful for the Subject's Good, and that Subjects ought to be Loyal, Obedient, and Submissive to Magistrates: the Latter has not only learned this from his *Reason*, but thinks himself assured of the Truth of it in much more certain Terms, and the *Duties* pressed upon him by much stronger Motives from *Revelation*; since *He* acts under a Perswasion of the

the truth of the *Gospel* Threats and Promises, and therefore thinks Himself Sure of enjoying Glories unspeakable in the *Next World*, if he behaves regularly and usefully in *This*. On this consideration only it must be impossible, that the most refined Rules of *Mere Morality* can, in so influencing a Manner, inculcate the mutual Obligations of Governours and Subjects, as does the Christian's System of Ethicks, the Holy Scriptures. From *Them*, as on the one hand, the Tyrants of the Earth, and the Perverters of Justice may learn to tremble with expectation, of being *Themselves* arraigned before a Tribunal more Dreadful than Their own; and *the Oppressor, the Plunderer, or the Seller of his Country* may be taught the poorness of his Profit, whilst *he gains the World, and loses his own Soul*: So on the other hand, Good and Virtuous Magistrates are supplied with abundant Consolation and Encouragement, under all their Care and Solitude for the Glory of God and the Welfare of the People, from *a sure and certain Hope* of exchanging their Earthly Honours for an Incorruptible Crown of Glory. Nor are the Scriptures less careful to secure to Magistrates the Obedience of their Subjects. We *there* find, that God has expressly declared, *that by Him Kings reign*: and we are commanded, *Every Soul, to be subject to the Higher Powers*, because *they are ordained of God*; and Damnation is denounced to those, that resist their Lawful Authority. What can in so effectual a manner press home to the Conscience the Obligations of the People to
their

their Governours, as the remembrance of this Awful Character imprinted on Them by God's own Commission? Could a People be so fond as to Imagine, that Magistrates are Creatures of *their own*, and owed their Superiority to *their* Appointment; they might easily be induced to believe, that they have sufficient Warrant to Disobey, whenever their Commands shall be disagreeable to *their* Capricious Humours: but when it is believed, that God has pronounced Them *His* Ministers, deriving their Power from *Himself*, and has threatned Damnation to those, that shall presume to Resist Them: we have surely much stronger Arguments for our Attachment to Them, than any, that can be brought from the Hopes of Preferment, or Fear of Temporal Punishment; which probably, if we put our Religion out of the Question, would be the most prevailing, if not the *only* Motives to Loyalty. Upon these Considerations then, all Endeavours to lessen the Influence of our Religion demand the Chastisement of the Civil Ruler, both for *his own* Security, and the Prosperity of *the Publick*. But this, in the Modest language of Some amongst us, is the Doctrine of *Persecution*: If it be so; it will be *Persecution* for Governours to use the Sword of Justice for their Own, and the Common Good, and to endeavour to keep the People committed to their Charge in *Wealth, Peace, and Godliness*.

I am now to conclude with a short Reflection, upon what has been said. If the Well-being of Whole Nations is thus in the Hands of Them, that

that *bear Rule*; how Glorious, how Amiable is the *Character*, and how Exquisite must be the *Self-satisfaction* of Those of Exalted Station, whose *Inclination* and *Resolution* are equal to their *Power* and *Opportunity*, of being so extensively Beneficent? A Consciousness of having done Good, in *any one* Instance, administers to Men of *Great Minds* a Reality of Joy unknown to all but those, that know how to do Good: But how unspeakably Improved must that *Joy* be; when it is remembered, that their Acts of Goodness do not terminate in *This* or *That* Man's Happiness, but that they are extended to their Country, and that Whole Multitudes rejoice in the Effects of them? Was the Sincerity of this most Rational Pleasure capable of Description, I should not *here* attempt to describe it; as I am perswaded, that *Many*, who hear me, can *in the most happy and convincing manner* be inform'd, What it is, from their own Breasts. I shall only add therefore, that to be thus Diffusively Good, is to approach in Likeness, as nearly as the Infirmities of Humanity will permit, to That most Perfect Being, whose most Lovely Attribute is Infinity of Goodness.

As to those, who in their own Ease and Safety shall at any time feel the Consequences of *the Righteous being in Authority*; *They* surely cannot want being reminded, how strongly they are called upon for the largest Returns of Obedience and Gratitude.

In a word, what has been said may be a Lesson of *Religion* and *Loyalty* to Men of all Orders
and

and Degrees: And without the *One* in vain do we pretend to the *Other*. However loudly the Patrons of Impiety may boast their Affection to Men in Power; whatever Denominations they may think proper to Shelter themselves under; true it is, that the Bad *Man* cannot be a Good *Subject*: He only is so, whose Conscience is convinced of his Obligations to be so; and this Conviction will produce in him a Zeal, that will not content itself with Outward and Noisy Professions, but will discover itself to have a Real place in the Heart by a Suitableness of Behaviour. Actuated as we ought to be by such a Zeal, as *on the one hand*, we shall *earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints* in it's true Primitive Purity: so *on the other*, it will not permit our Obedience to the Civil Magistrate to depend upon Our Own, or Other Mens Caprice: We shall give both *God* and *Cesar* their Due, from a Fixed Principle of Duty, Superiour to all the empty Vanities of Popularity, or the little Designs of Self-interest. And however the Children of this World may fancy themselves Wise in their Generation, This will be found in the End to be the *Best Patriotism*; thus shall we be the Truest Friends to *Ourselves*, to *our King*, and to *our Country*.

F I N I S.

